Dear Henry (and Bissi), 11/13/83

Friday evening George Lardner phoned me to ask for something he knew I had and the Post had not wanted to use when I offered it. Apparently Jean Davison has taken issue with his accurate quotation of the commissioned officer who was in charge of the work Oswald did in MACS after Oswald was back in the U.S. Donovan testified (as it happens, if I recall correctly, on a page Davison quotes) that Oswald had at least a secret security clearance then. She wrote her letter for publication and I believe she will be sorry.

I told you about the former Oswald Marine associate who phoned me in 1966 to tell me things about Oswald, including that he had crypto clearance and that this required Top Secret clearance. When everything else this man told me checked out, and I spent some time checking it out, including in New Orleans, and because it made sense when the Marines had to change all their codes after the "defection," I tried to think of how I could obtain official confirmation. I have it, I've given it to George, and I report it to you, with copies if you'd like, only not for any public uses or to others until after 11/22.

While Rankin's letter is not at that point (and I have it if either of you wants it) the response of the Marines when he was trying tomestablish that Oswald had no security clearance is CE 1961. It reports no security clearance other than in Oswald's initial radar training, at Jacksonville, but it does acknowledge that men were qualified for higher clearances when their work required it. Which is what Donovan testified. It makes essentially meaningless references to Oswald's assignments outside of Atsugi, sometimes referring to them as merely "maneuvers."

Two of the Marines whose words meant so much to Davison (and sometimes Epstein et al) convinced the Commission that Oswald killed his colleague Martin Schrand. The Commission asked the Marines, which assured it that he had not by providing the Schrand inquest. I did not find it in Commission records but I did get it under FOIA. It is quite explicit in stating that they worked in the "crypto van." In order to work in, even get into, the crypto van, Oswald, Schrand and the others all required crypto clearance and what it in turn required. It is that simple.

The official inquiry, which I would have thought Epstein and/or those helping him would have sought and obtained, also reflects the fact (missing in all other marine records of which I know) that Oswald's outfit had just returned from its part in Operation Strongback. And when they returned, their crypto van was removed from the carrier and deposited on the shore near where it was berthed at Cubi point, which, perhaps by remarkable coincidence only, was also a major CIA station.

Looking at this another way, it appears that Oswald never had any overseas assignment that was not related to the CIA. And he never once mentioned it in his copious notes. Nor is he ever quoted as having mentioned it, ever.

This morning, as every weekend early morning, I was sitting and listening to the WAMU jazz program on that wonderful Soundabout, which always makes me think of you (it was Punk Johnson, if you know New Orleans jazz, the early and one of the great trumpeters) and my mind wandered and I did think of you. Thus also this letter. I decied that I've heard nothing from you for so long because you do not like what I've been saying or have a close deadline or both. And then I realized, whether or not you do or even intended it, that in this chapter, the last you've sent me, for the first time you abandon a middle position while making an artifical effort to preserve it. In turn this led me to the conjecture that the rest of the book will be of different character than the first. And that, of course, is entirely your affair. as it is if you want no help from me on it.

If I am correct in this you are going to have additional problems now, thanks to Davison and the push behind her sycophancy. For example, Lardner will be more than

merely aware of the actuality of Oswald's clearance. So will many others be because Davison so foolishly forced the issue.

Later. This is but one of many illustrations. While I doubt most reviewers will be as perceptive as Gardner, those who have access to his review willnbe at least alerted. Then there will be her appearances and what she'll do if she has informed questioning or an adversary. Or if letters are written after reviews are read, with or without influence. In general, I think, the more Norton promotes the more there can be informed reaction.

She has two visible problems. One is her political beliefs, which are probably hidden to most and the other is her preconceptions, which are less hidden. I know of no good book that has survived these liabilities. I mean on this subject.

In combination, these have made her dishonest and that is a fact regardless of the sucess or failure of her book.

Another who has been asked to write a review has phoned me. I asked about the usual biographical data that accompanied the review copy. There was none. There was but a single sentence about her. It described her as a free-lance writer. That is less than she says in the book. It also is quite exceptional, especially because there is no reason to suspect that she has two heads. So, as I wonder why she and the publisher are so reticent, I wonder also about the remarkable coincidence of her having the name Davison and teaching in Georgia when there is the Penkovsky case Davison, in Oswald's notebook, who also was from Georgia and one presumes returned there when he had to leave Moscow over the Penkovsky case. Alexis's wife, at least then, was named Claire. He had a brother Peter, who took Russian speacial training at Columbia. (I do not find my copies of those FBI reports but I have some recollection of them particularly because they looked into Peter.) There is a reference to a Thomas that may be an error. And, of course, it is possible that she is not related to any. I have no idea whether she could be a sister. I had someone ask for the data on her. Norton reported than said that it would be made available with the usual kit that accompanies printed review copies. I know of none and the one who called me had the book, not bound proofs..

Best wishes,